1974

Oral History Interview: Donivan E. Adams

Donivan E. Adams

Education -

Donovan E Adams - woodworker at heart.

1) Warden State Penitentiary 6 Feb, 1958, confirmed by legislature 7 Feb 1958. to replace Mr E H Tucker.
Born at Wick W Va.

Motor Vehicle Was tutor at Marshall College & Concord State College to instruct high school teachers in driver safety.

State Police Began career at Fairmont, later Morgantown, also served in Tridelphia, New Martinsville, St Marys, Romney, Petersburg, Charleston.

Person 1) "Firm in belief that Modern prisons should stress importance of Christian guidance programs."
2) hobby projects. (leather, wood, glass).
3) Adequate recreational facilities. regular fight card program for inmates.
4) tubercular patients transferred to Hopemont Sanatorium
5) Strong in commitment to proper facilities for rehabilitation
"I will not see any inmate mistreated, nor do I want any officials mistreated."
6) education.

Spoke conc March 1958 # of the Pennsope of Council groups - inmates representing various cell blocks and shops to confer w/ official groups (Warden).
Never advocate harsh & inhumane punitive measures.
Will be stern disciplinarian.
Heart Fund Feb 20, musical entertainment, fights
person would assist in any worthy civic cause.
Interested in seeing religious program expanded

Fight card introduced by April 1958.
Sought musical instruments for penitentiary.

Heart Fund Fight Card earned $ 311.

#3

1) Again sought 40 instruments.
2) Thought of swimming pool on walls of prison, April 1958.
3) By April had transferred tubercular patents to Hopemont Sanatarium. Converted portion of prison into Department of Education. Education related to parole
4) Added fried chicken to menu once a month after Easter Sunday suppers.
Letter from Ernest Romanoff on April #.
re Inmate Committee system - asked for elections not appointments of persons to meet w/ Warden every 2 wks
3 guards also elected, one from each shift.

Done 25 Mar 15 patients.

Present were Mr. Harold Neely & Joe Peters at transfer
Neely Commissioner of Public Institutions & Joe Peters State Budget Analyst.

#4

May 1958 Called 1st for mail & packages for men not receiving any. To remedy situation placed proceeds from concession stand into fund for the needs of inmates.
glasses for inmates.
Still continues to call for instruments.

#5

Screen pro

June 1958

Use of inmate instructor in art class.
Interdenominational church services at prison.
June 12 formal transfer of tubercular patients.

July 1958.

Fourth of July festivities cleared $169.08 used for eyeglasses & teeth for inmates who do not have funds credited to their accounts. (Some 500 had teeth problems)
"The problems of my boys will be my problems."
Shows to be friendly a word fear.

Aug 1958 $600 Check from Mr Ralph A. Villani & Mr Les Rawlings for prison instruments. & Conn Music Co.

Sept 1958

beautification of inmate cemetery - flower fund.
Sept 15 1958 attended Annual Wardens Assn meeting in Detroit.
Carl Underwood on 3 Nov 1958 visited Moundsville met w/ employees.
Relations w/ Parole Board.
Was bookbinding plant organized at Moundsville in April 1955 as Neely requested -

July-Aug 1955

Moundsville 50 yrs behind other institutions - little more than good county jail.
Operate w/ out psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists & full time chaplains.

Population 1800 yrs of time of each served
Maximum 34.000 yrs. Calls for drastic changes
in program.
Canaery (peak).
Hadbook at 1959 state fair Lewisburg Was Dis
her idea.
W. E Day Director of Education.
S. A. Moore his replacement.
Oct 1959
Announces appt ment of James Hadjis DDS
as institution dentest.
Served to 1961

Afel Doddrill Jr Deputy Warden, lives
in Huntington -

On Death Penalty

Rise in Violent Crime Rate Changes Ex-Warden's Mind

This is another in a series of stories about persons interviewed for the "Oral History of Appalachia," a Marshall University project to capture the special flavor of life among the hills during earlier times.

By John G. Morgan
Staff Writer

Donivon Edwin Adams was warden at the state penitentiary when the last man was executed there 17 years ago.

At that time Adams was opposed to the death penalty. But today, as a 66-year-old maple syrup and cattle farmer in semiretirement, he has a different viewpoint.

"I am changing my mind a good bit," he says. " The violent crime rate is going up. It might be well to reinstitute the death penalty for certain types of violent crimes."

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ADAMS WITNESSED the last execution on April 3, 1959. Elmer Brunner of Cabell County was put to death in the electric chair on that date for the murder of a Huntington woman. The legislature removed the death penalty in 1965.

In his capacity as warden, Adams also witnessed two previous executions. Larry Fudge of Cabell County died on July 1, 1958, and Eugene Linger of Upshur County on June 5, 1958. Both were convicted murderers.

What's it like to have a man on death row, the former warden is asked in an interview with Dr. Michael J. Galgano of Marshall.

"Well, it's a terrible ordeal. There's no other way to describe it. It's just really terrible, because you have a man involved

Donivon Adams
Former Warden

where the legislature let me down."

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ADAMS, of Middlebourne, Tyler County, was appointed warden by his good friend, Gov. Underwood, also a Tyler resident at the time. That was in February 1958. During the previous 24 years, Adams served on the state police force.

The highway patrol was established one year after he entered the police force in 1934. The first car issued to him was a 1935 Chevrolet roadster.

"I was required to drive it at all times regardless of the temperature and with the top down. The only time you could put it up was when you were having falling weather, rain or snow. If it was zero, it didn't make any difference. The top had to be down."

What was his closest call as a state trooper?

"We took these fellows into jail at Petersburg. . . I went back to our car. There laid an old loaded pistol on the back seat. Well, these were really desperadoes we had. And it really makes you shiver in your boots when you know that the man was sitting behind you with a loaded gun. . "

See Intercepted Message on Page 6A.

"As it drew near the time, of course, everything got a little tighter, a little more tense, and you could see it in the staff, and you could see it in the inmates, and you could see it in the individual.

"I think being quiet was the most visible sign in the staff and in the inmates, too. Everybody just seemed to get each day a little more speechless, not saying anything, just thinking.

"When a man was on death row with his execution date set, I paid particular attention to his spiritual welfare. I would make sure that his minister would come sometime or Lt. Eads (of the Salvation Army) or maybe one of the other local ministers.

"I would ask the minister to come in and talk to the men on death row, and most of those fellows made a profession of faith. I believe all three did and were baptized before they were executed. . . I had to get an outsider to come in and do the baptizing. We built an old tank in the shop and put it up there in front of all the boys. Had our baptismal service.

"I was very careful with the custodial people about handling an inmate that was sentenced to die. I wanted somebody that didn't cuss and raise hell, somebody that would set a good example and could give him a little help spiritually.

"I tried to pamper him a little bit with food, give him the things he liked. Of course, on the last day, he could order anything he wanted. Wouldn't make any difference what it was, we'd get it for him. If it was watermelon in December, he'd still get watermelon. And then two of those fellows asked me to eat their last meal with them. . . It was difficult, but after the thing was all over, I was kind of proud that they wanted to eat with me."

***

DURING HIS three years as warden, ending in February 1961, Adams effected numerous reforms with the full support of Harold Neely, public institutions commissioner. Adams started a religious program with a new emphasis on gospel singing. At his urging, about 495 songbooks were provided by local churches. The prison gospel singers "sang all over the state," he says. Donations were accepted from audiences and used in the purchase of eyeglasses and dentures for prisoners.

"I got our dentist to come in there and teach my boys how to make dentures," he says. "Every man in there with no teeth had new dentures. And I mean they were nice ones."

Adams says his greatest failure as warden was his inability to establish a program of rehabilitation. He describes it this way:

"I had worked it out where I could feed them all, and I could house them well, and had an educational program that was good compared to what I found there. I could take care of their health, I could take care of their teeth, I could take care of their

'ce Miller Teeting

few ... I've never run from a fight in my life."

Miller agreed that federal court action involving miners' problems was an important issue, but stressed that collective bargaining, not an illegal strike, was the way to handle it.

But he noted that he intends to recommend to the UMW International Executive Board today that they "deal with those who have been divisive in the severest manner," including possible use of expulsion from the UMW ranks.

In other developments Sunday, a group of women at the Cedar Grove rally announced that they intend to stage a food stamp protest at the State Capitol starting at 9 a.m. today. Striking miners and their families have been denied food stamps by welfare officials, who charge that the strike is illegal.

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IN MADISON, hundreds of leaflets were apparently dumped on the city's streets by a group called it "Right to Work Movement." The leaflets stated that it is "understood" that courts do not belong in the union, but "now is not the time to fight. The time to fight is contract time."

The leaflet carried an announcement for a rally for "all miners interested in going back to work" to be held at 3 p.m. Sunday at Scott High School ballfield at Danville. About 100 persons reportedly turned out for the rally, but it was not known how many were right-to-work supporters, or strikers who heard about the meeting and showed up to protest. Strike supporters said a vote was taken among those who turned out, and all opted to continue the strike.

The right-to-work pamphlets, which stated that the group has only one demand, "to work and support our families," carried no names of officers or spokesmen, and listed no address for the organization.

Chapmanville Man Dies Of Apparent Overdose

Mobster

From Page One

In Washington, meanwhile, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, chairman of the new permanent Senate Intelligence Committee, said Sunday that it would be premature to decide on a congressional investigation until more facts of the killing are known.

"As soon as we have more of the facts available, I will see they are presented to the committee and it will be up to them to decide whether to investigate," he said.

Roselli was reported missing by his sister, with whom he had recently been living in Plantation, north of Miami. She said she last saw him when he left home to play golf. His car was found a few days later at Miami International Airport, golf bags still in the trunk.

County detectives would not discuss the case.

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"WE'RE TRYING TO work this thing from a homicide aspect," said Charles Zatrepalek. "We have to keep a lot of information in the investigative form, so can't release any."

FBI spokesmen in Miami and in Washington said that agency would not become involved unless a violation of a federal law turns up.

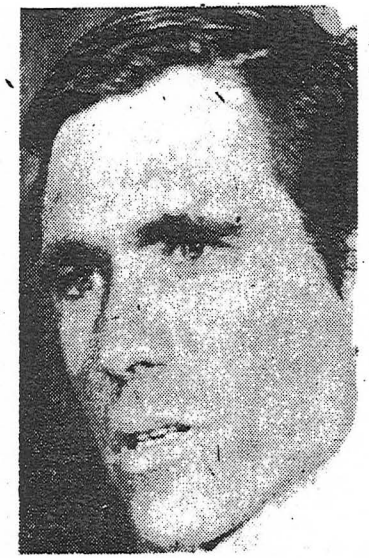
Roselli was a lifelong associate of Giancana, who became the kingpin of the Chicago rackets in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Roselli was sent to Las Vegas, Nev., in the 1950s to operate the mob's interests there but stayed under the control of the Chicago organization.

He went to Los Angeles in the early 1960s and was based there when Castro took over Cuba, breaking the mob's control over gambling and other crime activity on that island.

Various sources have cited this as the reason for the CIA's going to the mob with the idea of killing Castro.

Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, chairman of the Senate panel investigating the CIA, said last year that it might never be determined where the order to eliminate Castro originated.



SPEAKING about his experiences is Richard Hughes, who spent eight years sheltering the street children of Vietnam. Hughes thinks that he has left his hundreds of "shoeshine boys" in good hands and believes that all foreigners should leave Vietnam. He says the Communist regime can handle the country's problems on is own. Hughes is now in Bangkok.

(AP Wirephoto)

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December 10, 1993

Dear Mr. Adams,

On September 19, 1974 you were interviewed by Dr. Michael J. Galgano of the Marshall University Oral History Office. At this time, we would like to get your approval to make the interview available to the public. If you would like to review the transcript, please let us know and we would be happy to send you a copy. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you do not wish to review the transcript and we will make it available in the Morrow Library Special Collections.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Smith

Barbara Smith, Director
Oral History of
Appalachia Program

AUTHORIZATION FORM: (Please check one of the following options and return to Marshall University Oral History Department, Smith Hall, Care of Dr. Barbara Smith, Huntington, WV 25755-2678)

_____ Release the transcript without my review

_____ Release the transcript and send me a copy

_____ Send a copy of the transcript and wait for my review

Signature _____ Date _____

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ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, D. E. Adams, the undersigned, of R. D. 1, Box 237; Middlebourne, County of Tyler, State of West Virginia, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E. Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation, Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title, interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on September 19, 1974, to be used for scholarly purposes, including study and rights to reproduction.

D.E.A. initial — Open and usable after my review.

_____ initial — Closed for a period of _____ years.

_____ initial — Closed for my lifetime.

_____ initial — Closed for my lifetime unless special permission is gained from me or my assigns.

Date September 29, 1974

D. E. Adams
(Signature - Interviewee)

R. D. 1, Box 237
Address

Middlebourne, West Virginia 26149

Date 19 September 1974

Michael J. Sulgano
(Signature - Witness)

An Interview With

Donivon Edwin Adams

Conducted by

Dr. Michael J. Galgano

September 19, 1974

Middlebourne, West Virginia

MJG: Donivon Edwin Adams of R. F. D. One, Middlebourne, West Virginia. Mr. Adams was born on October 29, 1909, in Tyler County, West Virginia. The interview, ah, is being held on the 19th of September, 1974, by Dr. Michael J. Galgano. Mr. Adams, ah, could you tell us a bit about your, your family, your parents, and, ah, who they were, where they lived?

DEA: Well, we lived in Tyler County all our life practically, and I was the youngest of three children. I had a brother and a sister.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, what were their names?

DEA: I had a brother, Harold, and my sister's name is Jesse.

MJG: Uh huh. And, you say you lived in the Tyler County area. Ah, what did your father do?

DEA: He was an oil field worker, a pumper.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so we lived in the oil field back in the good oil days for Tyler County.

MJG: Uh huh. And, when did they start to, to peter out? You said back in the good old oil days.

DEA: Well, they, ah, they were pretty well finished up in the early 30's. It really wasn't depleated, but the company that operated the production crew here thought they had to have a high-producing well or it wasn't worth keeping. So, they pulled them out /MJG: Uh huh./ and plugged them.

MJG: What are your earliest remembrances of childhood? What stands out in your mind from your upbringing, from your childhood experiences?

DEA: Oh, I'm not sure. Some of the earliest things I remember was, ah, going to school, of course, in a little old one-room country school.

MJG: Where was that?

DEA: Over on McKim /MJG: Uh huh./ in Tyler County. And, ah, the foolish thing we did in sleigh riding down steep hills and that sort of thing. And, ah, one of the strange things I can't understand we had ice skates, my brother and I, from the time I can remember /MJG: Uh huh./ and always did skate And, in 1918, when the, during World War I, we had a terrible winter, and we could skate to school in the road. Now, there was just that much ice. So, it was childhood things.

MJG: Uh huh. Ah, do you remember either parent more than the other?

DEA: No, I had good parents. Dad was a good provider, worked all the time. He was a sober sort of man. Sang a lot in the church.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: This sort of thing.

MJG: Which church was this?

DEA: That was the Methodist Church.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, in, in school, you say you went to a one-room schoolbuilding, ah, in Tyler County. Ah, was it a three-R type of school or?

DEA: Just about. They had all grades up to the eighth grade, but it was amazing how much the younger children, though, learned from the older ones. By the time you got to the eighth grade, you knew it all anyway, because you heard it every year and, ah.

MJG: Uh huh. Were the older students used to help teach or /DEA: No./ or was this just grapevine?

DEA: No, it was just eavesdropping was what it was.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh. Oh, well, when you left the Tyler County High School in Middlebourne, ah, you attended normal school there for a year, and you went on to West Liberty.

DEA: Yes, I had normal school in high school at that time. You would, ah, take a year of that normal work there at the high school, and one summer term at one of the state colleges, and

get a teaching certificate /MJG: Uh huh./, and that's what I did.

MJG: What was your teaching certificate in? What were you qualified to teach?

DEA: Ah, elementary.

MJG: Uh huh. And, where did you teach?

DEA: I taught, ah, at Plum Run, ah, Rock Run, Meadville, and Joseph. Those were all one-room schools.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, in these schools, did you handle all of the elementary grades?

DEA: Handled everything.

MJG: Everything, now, what does that encompass?

DEA: From beginners to the eighth grade in all subjects.

MJG: All subjects.

DEA: It was a fast pace. Ah, you would think, if you would watch, it was going so fast that nobody was learning anything. But, ah, we didn't have so many things to distract us back then.

MJG: Uh huh. Uh huh. Do you recall any of the pupils you taught? Do any of them stand out by name as being particularly, ah, noteworthy either in positive or other way (laughs)?

DEA: No, I don't think any of them are really outstanding, ah.

MJG: To you outstanding, that, ah, someone who.

DEA: Good citizens. I never knew of any of them being in the penitentiary.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, just good old salt of the earth people, you know.

MJG: Anyone who, ah, stands out to you by name who was, ah, ah, either particularly, ah, there are students that teachers have who stand out in their memories. Is there anyone

like that?

DEA: Oh, I think of youngsters who were exceedingly bright /MJG: Uh huh./, ah, sharp as a tack, I remember those youngsters more long about the fifth grade /MJG: Uh huh./, than any other but, ah.

MJG: Now, from these schools, from Plum Run, ah, Rock Run, and Meadville, and Joseph, where did the students go from there? Into the high schools?

DEA: Well, in the high school, Middlebourne. And, there weren't any roads at that time. You, ah, you had to go to Middlebourne and stay.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, when my brother and I went to high school there, we, ah, had a room where we what we called "bached." We did our own cooking /MJG: Uh huh./, and about two-thirds of the youngsters in the school, at that time, were doing the same thing /MJG: Uh huh./, because there were no roads to get from home in there.

MJG: Well, what was the school year then? Did you go home on weekends?

DEA: Yes, went home on weekends, and, ah, ah, Mother would do the laundry, and we'd gather up more supplies, and we'd stay another week.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh. Now, when you taught in Plum Run and, and the other places, did you live there or did you commu t e in?

DEA: Ah, no, I lived at Wick and, ah, walked. One school was, ah, six miles away, and I walked to that school of the morning and back of an evening /MJG: Uh huh, uh huh./ over the hills.

MJG: You said while you were teaching there, you went in the summers to West Liberty State College.

DEA: Yes.

MJG: And, what was the summer curriculum like there?

DEA: Ah, oh, I suppose it pretty much like it is today, education courses, this sort of thing was what we were taking.

MJG: Well, did you continue then in elementary school training?

DEA: Yeah, uh huh.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, you left teaching, ah, you taught, ah, in Tyler County in a one-room building, ah, with your first wife, ah, Mary Tressie Kathleen Freeland.

DEA: Yes.

MJG: And, ah, and I understand from, from Kay that you all eloped. Now, why was that?

DEA: Ah, a h, we really didn't elope. We were ready to get married, and she was in West Liberty the same as I was, and, ah, and Wellsburg was only just a few miles from West Liberty, one of the most famous places in the world where we was to get married, you know.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: You could go there and in twenty minutes it was all over.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, we got married while we were at West Liberty while going to school.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, the reason we kept it quiet was that, ah, the board of education wouldn't hire two people from the same family. Well, she wanted to teach, and I wanted to teach, so she stayed home, and I stayed home.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, that way we both got to teach.

MJG: How long did this go on?

DEA: There was only a year of that.

MJG: And, what did you do at the end of that year?

DEA: Ah, well, ah, there was an awful oversupply of, ah, teachers at that particular time, and, ah, you didn't get a school every year.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I had a brother, and I had a sister, and they were both teachers, and, ah, so they was divided up. One year one would get a school, and the next year the other one had to find something else to do, so in the off years, I started driving a, ah, cream truck.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, making my rounds with the cream truck one day a man said to me, ah, "You ought to be in the Department of Public Safety, the state police." And, I said, "Well, that never occurred to me." And, he said, "Well, my brother-in-law is the superintendent." Said, "Would you be interested in talking to him?" He said, "I've been talking to him about you," and, ah, I said, "Yes, I would." And, so, one day, he called me, now, he said, "He'll be here tomorrow. Come over and talk to him."

MJG: Uh huh. And, now, who was the superintendent at that time?

DEA: Ah, P. D. Shingleton.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, what year was this?

DEA: Nineteen thirty-four.

MJG: And, you went to work then for the state, state police /DEA: Uh huh./ at that time.

DEA: Yes.

MJG: Well, what were your duties when you began? Where were you stationed?

DEA: Well, ah, during my 23½ years in the Department of Public Safety, I was stationed first at Fairmont, and then Morgantown, and New Martinsville, then back to Morgantown, and then St. Marys, Romney, Petersburg, and from Petersburg I went into department

headquarters in charge of the Motor Vehicle Section Bureau.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, ah, all of these towns are located in the same division or the same area.

DEA: All in the northern part of the state.

MJG: Uh huh. Could you explain to me how the state is divided in, in terms of state police?

DEA: Well, it's divided into four companies /MJG: Uh huh./, A, B, C, and D with headquarters in Chinchton, Elkins, Beckley, and South Charleston.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, I think it's a little different at this time. I haven't kept up with it.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, what were some of your duties as you started out in the state police?

DEA: General police work, ah, all types of police work. Ah, I was in the, about a year after I went in the department, the state started the highway patrol portion of the department /MJG: Uh huh./ patrolling the highways and, ah.

MJG: What kinds of cars did you use to patrol?

DEA: The first car I had issued to me was a '35 Chevrolet Roadster.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I was required to drive it at all times regardless of the temperature with the top down, and the only time you could put it up was when you were having falling weather, rain or snow. If it was just zero, it didn't make any difference, the top had to be down.

MJG: What was that?

DEA: I don't know unless they were putting us on display (laughs). It, it was odd. We never did completely understand it, but that was the order.

MJG: Did you patrol all individually or in groups?

DEA: Ah, most of it was done by yourself. At night we generally doubled up, two to a vehicle.

MJG: Ah, what kind of patrolling, what particular were you? Were you supervising, ah, speeding or.

DEA: Well, of course, at that time, the number of vehicles registered in the state was on the increase, and speed was increasing, and the highway fatalities were increasing, and we were trying to hold that down. And, you were enforcing weight limits.

MJG: Uh huh. Did they have weigh stations where trucks were supposed to pull in?

DEA: Ah, no, we had portible scales we'd take out on the road.

MJG: Uh huh. How did they operate?

DEA: Ah, we stopped the truck right on the road, and then push the scales under the wheels, and he'd drive right up on little platform scale.

MJG: Uh huh. Did you find that many people, ah, were abusing, ah, weight regulations on the highway?

DEA: Well, you could only catch a few at any location you would choose, because, ah, the word soon passed along. First truck or two notified all the rest, and no one came that way, you see /MJG: Uh huh./, and so, ah, the work travelled rather rapidly I would say.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so we would, as soon as trucks shut down and didn't come through, we'd move to another location over on another road, you see, and maybe come back to the same location a little bit later on.

MJG: Uh huh. Ah, what, ah, were some of the other duties and responsibilities that you had in general police work /DEA: Oh./ other than.

DEA: Ah, criminal investigation was always a part of state police.

MJG: Were there, were there any particular training courses that you had to undergo?

DEA: Oh, we had, ah, we had an annual in-service training program /MJG: Uh huh./, which you went in and learned to read fingerprints, and to take fingerprints, and all this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Usually the department had a pretty good training program.

MJG: Uh huh. Who was the commander of your company at the time you first went in?

DEA: J. R. Brockus was the captain at the time I went in.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: But, you serve under many captains. Seems like they get those positions about the time they're ready to retire and changing all the time.

MJG: Uh huh. Do you recall any particularly interesting times or moments as a state police officer?

DEA: Oh, you have a lots of, ah, close calls in the department, ah, like first call, I mean, you're chance of getting killed or injured; they're numerous.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, I remember one time over at Petersburg back on top of a mountain, the old chief of police over there by the name of Lord and I captured three escapees from a penitentiary in Maryland. And, we always made it a point to search every man for weapons. And, we did that pretty religiously at first, cause if you didn't, you were liable to get it used on you. And, we took these fellows into the jail at Petersburg, and after we put them in jail, I went back out to the car. There laid an old pistol loaded on the back seat. Well, these were really desperados that we had. And, it really makes you shiver in your boots when you know that man was sitting behind you with a loaded gun. And, ah, lots of times that happened with, ah, you'd miss a weapon when you search a fellow, and you'd take him to jail you'd find out maybe he'd had razor or a butcher knife on him or something sticking in his shoe that you missed or something like that, you know.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, oh, you've got an unusual chase somebody with a gun, and you'd be looking down the barrel from the wrong direction, but it can kind of shake you.

MJG: Uh huh. I understand you also were assigned during your tenure with the state police as a tutor at, of Marshall College and Concord College, ah, to instruct high school teachers in, in driver education, driver safety. When did that come about? What were the circumstances of it?

DEA: Well, ah, I was in on the, on the team that helped establish driving training in high school. And, of course, to get the thing established you had to train teachers that could, could handle the subject. And, so they put together a group state police and, ah, other people that were knowledgeable about traffic and the hazards of driving and so forth. And, we had to train high school teachers so they could teach driver education. And, the theory behind the whole thing was that if you learned from your parents, you pick up all their bad habits, but if you learn from a teacher, your chances of getting good habits is much better. And, so, ah.

MJG: Well, when was this program set up?

DEA: Gee, why did you ask me that? Must have been in the '40's sometime.

MJG: Uh huh. Do you recall who was governor at the time, ah, who was in charge of, ah, public safety?

DEA: No, I don't. But, the first, ah, first high school teachers that we trained were at the West Virginia University High School at Morgantown was where we held our session.

MJG: Now, were these summer sessions?

DEA: Yes, in the summertime. Now, I'll tell you an odd incident that happened on that. They elected us of the state police to recruit teachers to take the training. Well, you had to work through board of education, principals, and so forth to see who they wanted to designate for this. Now, first it was, it was really an expensive thing as far as any structures are concerned, because you couldn't handle more than 12 students.

And, I had gone to a colored high school there at Morgantown, and the principal was willing, and they, they put it on coaches mostly, and the coach was willing to take the course, but he said, ah, "The university is not intergrated, and I can't go to the university; ah, I wouldn't feel at ease, and I know they don't want me." And, he said, "I will take this course if you will sit beside me." Now, I would be a state policeman in uniform, and I said, "Well, I can't do that all the time, but I will part of the time, because part of the time I'll be instructing and have other things to do, setting up projects and so forth." So, he said, "All right, I'll go." And, he did go. And, I sat beside of him a great deal of the time. Make him feel at ease in the course. He was the only colored fellow in it and the first.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: It seems so strange now to think back over that.

MJG: Yes. Can you recall the school he taught in?

DEA: Oh, it was a colored high school /MJG: In Morgantown./, ah, it would, across the river from Morgantown in Westover, but it served Mongahelia County. The only colored high school there. I've forgotten the name of the school.

MJG: ... and, you also taught in programs at Marshall and Concord. Were they set up at about the same time /DEA: Yes./ or a little bit later?

DEA: We would go from, ah, from one college to the other /MJG: Uh huh./ and hold these for teachers in different sections of the state.

MJG: Did you have any check program once the teachers received their instruction? Wh, was there any further direction and guidance from the state police?

DEA: Well, not in the way of refreshers for them, but we were giving the driver's test, and we knew what the finished product was like /MJG: Uh huh./, so that was the perfect check on that instructor.

MJG: Well, did you notice a marked improvement in people who had been trained in your program?

DEA: Oh, tremendous, tremendous. They were hundred percent better than the youngsters that just picked it up or were taught by their family.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, in these early driver education programs, ah, I know today most of the, ah, automobile dealers will provide cars to the schools. Hwo did they have, what kinds of cars did they have? Where did they get the cars?

DEA: Well, the first cars were furnished by the American Automobile Association, and then the dealers picked it up. But, this is good publicity, and I can sell that car after it's used and probably break even on it. And, so, the, the dealers picked that up, too.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, how long did you work in this kind of program?

DEA: Worked in it till it was established, and, ah, Marshall was the first school to establish a training program in driver education for teachers. And, once that started, we dropped our part of it, because it was where it should be in the first place.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh. Well, where did you move from that point once, did you move further into the motor vehicle end of the state police or, ah, back into general police work?

DEA: Well, ah, this was only a side issue. You were doing your policework and all the other things that you do in addition to that. It wasn't, ah, it only really took up a week or so /MJG: Uh huh./ or maybe three weeks you went through different colleges.

MJG: Were you ever involved in any strike work?

DEA: Oh, yes, I've done a lot of that.

MJG: Could you give me some for instances, ah, places, and situations? And, maybe some things that stand out in your mind about some strikes where you were, you were on duty.

DEA: Matter of fact, there was a big strike going on at Parkersburg at the time I enlisted in the department. And, ah, I remember the superintendent tell me we have so many men in the hospital injured in that strike, and we really need men. But, I, I

didn't get in on that strike, but, oh, I've been involved in lots of strikes in the coal field and, ah, Weirton Steel. Ah, Weirton Steel has always opposed the, ah, union as such. They've always had an independent union, but, ah, at one time, the, ah, CIO, what it was at that time, ah, tried to break that independent union and get in that steel mill, and we were there something like two months that time on that strike. Ah, very little violence; ah, our presence seemed to keep things in order. Had very little trouble.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, when you were on that kind of duty, how did you live? Did you live in motels or hotels?

DEA: Ah, sometimes in a hotel. Sometimes they would, ah, put us in private homes, ah, eat in restaurants and that sort of thing.

MJG: What was the duty like?

DEA: Ah.

MJG: Were you under a great deal of tension and stress, ah?

DEA: Sometimes you were. Sometimes you weren't. It would depend on the activity within the organization of the union.

MJG: This particular strike at Weirton Steel, ah, how tense was the situation there? How difficult was the duty?

DEA: Ah, it really wasn't too difficult. Ah, I remember when we first went there, there was maybe a dozen or so men there, and you had such long hours that, ah, I think I stood in one place from 10 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night and never moved out of it only to go to the bathroom.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ate standing right there, and my shoe size, size went from a nine and a half to, ah, 11 /MJG: Oh, my goodness./ in, in during that period so long on my feet that my arches broke down.

MJG: Hmm. Now, was this a fairly common thing among state policemen to do that kind of duty?

DEA: Yes, that's kind of fellow I was.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, we didn't like it, but we did it anyway.

MJG: Were there any violent confrontations that you were ever involved in in strike work?

DEA: Well, most of the violence that taken place during strikes is where you aren't. They just don't take place in you're presence. They're done at night and, ah, out of sight /MJG: Uh huh./ of police.

MJG: But, there were no confrontations, ah, like the ones that we're accustomed to say in the last four or five years of masses of, ah, people.

DEA: No. I remember one in Martinsburg of a, ah, some kind of a clothing factory over there where the pickets were massed in front of this plant. Had a street completely full. And, the old captain I mentioned, and I was just brand new in the department, and I went in without any training and was learning from the old men, and he put me on that strike; and we went to Markers, Parkers, er Martinsburg, and, ah, the people that were in the plant couldn't get out for this mob. And, ah, there was an old saying in the department that one trooper handles five hundred people. And, and, we kind of believed that. And, ah, there must have been a dozen of us over there, and the old captain marched his men right up the middle of that street, right square in front of the plant. Half of us went one way and half the other, and we cleared that street in five minutes.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: It was amazing.

MJG: Uh huh. During your tenure, did you notice any appreciable change in the attitude of people toward state police. Now, today policemen generally complain that they're not held in a kind of esteem that they once had (break in tape).

DEA: Well, of course, there were always people opposed to the police. Most of them had a reason to be, because they were

doing something illegal, but I had the feeling that anytime I really needed help it would be there, and I'll give you an example. One time between Fairmont and Chinchton, there was a streetcar crossing the highway, and just crossed the highway, and an old drunk stumbled out of the door of the streetcar and right out into the middle of the highway right, well, right in front of me, too, so there was nothing left for me to do only arrest the fellow. And, he was a great big burly sort of a fellow, and he really gave me a hard time. We were down in the road, and rolling over, and tumbled, and I was trying to get the handcuffs on him, and I couldn't get them on him. He was just too strong for me. And, all at once, a man said, "Do you need help, trooper?" And, I said, "I sure do." And, he jumped in and helped me put those handcuffs on that fellow. Now, now, I always felt that was there if you were right.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, our old captain always preached you must not only be right, but you must appear to be right.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: He would tell us that everyday, and it's so true.

MJG: How do you go about appearing to be right? It seems to me like that would be a very difficult thing to do. What are some of the things that you would do to appear to be in the right? Well, take this situation of coming up on a drunk who's come out into the road.

DEA: Well, that drunk had to be taken out of the road /MJG: Uh huh./ to protect himself and to protect other people using the highway /MJG: Uh huh./, and so it was necessary for me to take him out of there.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I certainly appreciated the man, but I didn't know, I never did know his name. Never saw him again, but he helped me, and I appreciated it.

MJG: Uh huh. But, still how do you appear to be in the right? How does, let's say there is a group of people around, and

you're doing your job, and police today even when they're doing their job, they're, they're subject to abuse. How do you, how do you convince a crowd that what you're doing is not only right but appears to be right. I, I.

DEA: Well, it isn't easy, but your demeanor had a tremendous effect on the people that are watching you. If you are angry, the people around you are against you.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Cause you have to keep a level head. Ah, it's a not a personal think to you anyway. You have no reason to get angry.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: You're just doing a job /MJG: Uh huh./, and so keep yourself cool.

MJG: Uh huh. What about appearance, physical appearance?

DEA: Well, you had to be well dressed, well groomed, clean /MJG: Uh huh./, and look like a policeman.

MJG: Uh huh. Were there courses or, ah, the inservice programs, was this stressed?

DEA: Very much so. Ah, of course, the state furnished your uniform, but, ah, it was up to you to keep that uniform clean, pressed, neat, and tidy; and we had a requirement that you had to get your hair cut once a week /MJG: Uh huh./ and be clean shaven and this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh. How much of your income went to this sort of, ah, keeping your hair trimmed and, ah, uniforms pressed and cleaned? Was there a central location where you took your uniforms, or did you do it privately?

DEA: No, you did that just anyplace you could get it done. It, ah, they were really unfair to us, because it was an expense and lots of times you would be out on a, on a detail away from home you had to provide your own meals and this sort of thing.

MJG: What was your pay when you started, do you recall?

DEA: My pay was $105 a month.

MJG: Uh huh. Did that have anything to do with the reason why you joined the force in 1935?

DEA: Well, ah, it was steady.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, that was really not a bad salary, not a bad salary, and they had, had a subsistence on that of, ah, $30 I believe to pay for meals, and lodging, and that sort of thing. But, the salary was $105.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, did you find that you were able to manage on that salary?

DEA: Yes. That was, ah, that was a good salary. The department always paid more than, ah, teachers with a bachelor of arts degree.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I know one time, ah, we were having difficulty getting men in the department to enlist, the kind of man we wanted, and I was over at Salem College recruiting for the department, and the old dean that I was talking to when we came to the salary, he said, "Young man, do you realize you're paying more than three-fourths of the teachers get in this college?" And, I said, "No, I wasn't aware of that." But, that kind of surprised me.

MJG: Uh huh. What kind of person were you looking for as a recruit in the, ah, in the what, what sorts of things did you look for in a recruit?

DEA: Well, of course, first of all, they had size requirements. It was five-nine and, ah, and a 160 pounds. That was the least.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, we like a man with a keen mind, was sharp, ah, level headed, an intelligent individual that, ah, had a pleasing personality, and, and this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh. How did you test them on these recruit requirements?

DEA: Well, we had, ah, a quite an extensive testing program at department headquarters. Out there in the field you didn't do any testing. You just interviewed trying to interest people in the department. But, ah, department headquarters, they had quite an extensive testing program there. Testing not only, ah, your mentality and your ability, but, ah, physically, and mentally, and every other kind of a test before you were accepted.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, other than the size requirements, Mr. Adams, were there any other kinds of requirements that you all had? You mentioned a minimum size, but, ah, were there minimum intelligence levels, high school graduates, something like that, some artificail, ah, limit or would, did it just depend on how well you did on the battery of tests?

DEA: Well, ah, beack when I first went into the department, the minimum requirement was, ah, I had to be a high school graduate.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Of course, I had about three years of college /MJG: Uh huh./ under my belt, and I was readily accepted in the department. But, ah, I expect now their recruits are probably averaging out three years of college.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I imagine they are.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh.

DEA: Because it just kept climbing and climbing.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Because I was at Salem trying to get college boys /MJG: Uh huh./, you see, so we were upgrading all the time.

MJG: Uh huh. How did the force change, ah, the time you first went into it until the time you officially left it in, in 1958?

DEA: Well, it had made a terrific change, ah, the set up in the administration wasn't too much different than that but the, ah, things we were doing as policemen and the equipment we had to work with when I went in I had a Chevrolet Roadster. When I left the barracks, no one could contact me. I was going on parole, patrol, and if I had difficulty out there, I had no way of contracting anybody else, so there was no communication system whatsoever when I went into the department.

MJG: How was that first developed, the communication system? Was it.

DEA: Ah, it started with radio /MJG: Uh huh./, a radio receiver. Now, not, not two way.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: It started with a receiver so you could call and tell them to call in, you see, and that sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh. Before that did you stop and call in?

DEA: Occasionally, you'd call in or, ah, if they were trying to find you, and they knew you were on a certain road, they would call out to a service station and say flag him down when he comes by and that sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Or sometimes they'd send somebody out to hunt you.

MJG: Uh huh. Other than the change in communications, how else did the force change?

DEA: Well, there were lots of changes in the, ah, things you were doing. Now, at the time I went in a great deal of our time was spent searching for moonshine /MJG: Uh huh./ of all things. Well, not now. You see, that's completely gone.

MJG: Do you have any good moonshine stories?

DEA: Oh, I think of one old fellow, he had his moonshine plant located between Morgantown and Blacksville up there in Monongalia County. And, ah, back at that time, you could either take a man into state court for moonshining, manufacturing liquor, or you could take him into federal court. And,

I don't know now what the criteria was, but made, we made the decision on, but that old fellow we were in federal court over at, ah, Elkins where we tried him, and, ah, there were two or three troopers over there testifying that day. And, finally, it was the defendant's turn to take the witness stand, and he was an old fellow with a full beard, white, and, ah, he, the defense attorney said, "Now, will you explain to the court just what you were doing?" He said, "Yes, sir." And, he told the jury and the court that he was making feed for his hogs, and he liked to ferment it (laughter). Ah, seemed to fatten them better.

MJG: Uh huh. Preserve them better, too (laughter).

DEA: Yeah, while we, ah, were, of course, no one took that. They, he was convicted. But, while we, we were there, the judge was sentencing some other fellows on moonshine violations in interstate transportation and so on or something. And, and, ah, there was, ah, one of the prisoners that was to be sentenced was sitting there in a chair right out in front of the judge, and he seemed to be twirling something around his finger, and then he'd stop and twirl it the other way. And, the judge says, "What is that, young man?" And, he says, "Ah, that's a rabbit foot." He said, "Do you think that's going to do you any good in this court?" And, he said, "I hope so." He said, "I sentence you to two years hard labor in Atlanta. Now, do you think it helped you any (laughs)?" That was old Judge Baker.

MJG: Uh huh. Were there other changes, Mr. Adams? You, you mentioned communication, you mentioned the, they seem to be less concerned nowadays with, ah, with moonshine. Ah, is there anything else that stands out? Now, you talked about motor vehicles and the involvement of the force in motor vehicle, motor-vehicle training, driver training, and so on. Anything else?

DEA: Well, ah, I think I could see, as the years roll by in the department, that there was more resistance in the courts than there was in the early days.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, seems like people were, had more money, could employ better counsel, and it was really a battle in court to get somebody /MJG: Uh huh./, ah, convicted or at least more

difficult.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, how did this affect morale in the department?

DEA: Ah, you had to do a better job.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Your reports had to be better, and they had to have meat in them. Things that you could refresh your mind when it came up time for trial that, ah, you really had the goods on him.

MJG: Uh huh. So, you think that this really compelled the police force to be a better police force.

DEA: It had to upgrade especially in the report department /MJG: Uh huh./, because after a case had gone by for a year and then come into court you had to have a good record that you could go back and refresh your memory of, of just what happened and what evidence you did have against that individual.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, of course, ah, fingerprinting developed the place, you just about fingerprinted everyone you put in jail, and, ah, that was a beautiful record /MJG: Uh huh./, the fingerprint.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, of course, we were filing all the time fingerprint cards with the F. B. I. and if they had a wanted notice on a man, we sent the cards in on someplace else in the United States, why, we'd get a notice on that and vice versa. We did files on most anybody.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, in the middle 50's before, ah, becoming the, ah, warden of the state penitentiary in Moundsville, ah, you served for a period at the headquarters of the state police in the division of motor vehicles ...

DEA: Well, it was the, ah, a division of the Department of Public Safety, but it was a Department of Motor Vehicles /MJG: Uh huh./, and that was located in the capitol building there at Charleston.

MJG: And, what were your responsibilities there?

DEA: We had charge of the motor vehicle inspection all over the state /MJG: Uh huh./ and had, ah, 17 troopers that inspected the inspection stations /MJG: Uh huh./, and, ah, you issued the, ah, sticker like you get on your windshield today, ah.

MJG: Now, were the same kind of inspection stations ...

DEA: No, I designed one when I was there, the sticker, and mine had a picture of the state on it.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, but, we had, ah, we made a manual for the stations to use to determine whether a vehicle would pass the inspection and this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh. But, the motor vehicle inspectors were still in the private garages, the, ah, inspection centers.

DEA: Yes, the people that did the inspecting, but we had troopers all over the state inpecting the inspection stations.

MJG: Now, was this done, ah, by the trooper driving in, ah, to have his vehicle inspected or how was this worked?

DEA: Ah, he might do that, or he might drive up in uniform and just go in and inspect the man's records, the record. You could sit in Charleston and tell whether a station in Wheeling was doing a good job of inspecting.

MJG: How could you tell this?

DEA: I could pick one just that quick. A good one, and I could pick a bad one.

MJG: What were the, how could you tell a good and bad one?

DEA: Okay, some stations were trying to railroad everyone that came in. They'd have all kinds of, ah, repair jobs that had to be done on that car. Maybe new brakes, ah, new tires, and just load him up with things really he didn't need. Just gouging him.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, then you'd find another station never a repair needed. Well, you'd know he was too lax.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, somewhere in between the two there was a good station operating.

MJG: How did you deal with these extremes with those who were either too harsh or too lax?

DEA: Evoked their license.

MJG: I see. Now, how common was that?

DEA: Ah, I would say it was fairly common in the early days to get it lined up.

MJG: Uh huh. I mean, would be the percentages be ten percent, 15, 20, a fourth?

DEA: Oh, I, no, I don't suppose it was ever more than five percent.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, did you do any of the, ah, the work in helping them set up new standards or new, ah, critera as the automobiles changed?

DEA: The manuals, yes, we worked all the time on, and, ah, you were forever having to, ah, revise the manual for the simple reason that automobiles were changing all the time. Like, you set up a manual to where, ah, an automobile with two head lights how high it ought to be, a certain distance from the vehicle, and then you get two headlights, and then you get one over the other /MJG: Uh huh./, and everytime you've got to change that manual.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh.

DEA: So, you were forever having to adjust to the automotive industry.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, in on the sixth of February of 1958, you were named the warden of Moundsville of the State Penitentiary

at Moundsville. Could you give us some of the background as to how you happened to be picked for that post, and why you took it, and so on?

DEA: Well, really, I'm not so sure I even know. I didn't apply for the position. I knew it was open. And, the, ah, governor had appointed a man by the name of Tucker warden, and the senate failed to confirm him. And, so, ah, I was a personal friend of the governor, Governor Underwood, and I was just head over heels in work in my own department down there, and, ah, I met him in the hall one day there in the capitol building, and, ah, we often stop, we stop and chat just a little as we meet. And, he said to me one day, ah, "Would you be interested in being warden of the penitentiary?" And, I said, "Hell, no." And, went right on down the hall. Now, I, I supposed that was the end of that, because I really wasn't interested in being the warden, hadn't thought about it. And, ah, it went on for a few days, the legislature was in session at that time, and it was coming right down on the last few days of the session, and all of his appointments had to be in right before they adjourned for confirmation. And, ah, he called me up one day, and he said, "Don, come over here. I want to talk to you." And, so, I went over to his office, and he said, "I want you to be warden of the penitentiary. And, I'd like for you to be here in the morning with a biographical sketch, because I want to name you. And, of course I'll have to give a release to the newspapers and so forth." And, I said, "Well, I'll think about it." So, I went home, and I sat up most of the night thinking about that place up there, what I had to lose, and really nothing to gain only a lot of hard work.

MJG: What did you have to lose?

DEA: Well, I had my retirement in the department that cost me $70 a month for as long as I lived that I lost which was a tremendous loss /MJG: Yes./ if I lived long enough (laughter). And, ah, I was in charge of the inspection bureau, and that was interesting work. And, I had 17 men out in the field that I had trained, and they were good men, sharp men, and I was enjoying that work.

MJG: Did you enjoy living in Charleston, too?

DEA: No, ah, that, that's the worst place in the world to live.

The water down there is the worst part of it, I think. It was at that time. And, the, ah, atmosphere. You never see the sun until about 10 o'clock. Terrible place to live. But, I didn't like that part of it. But, he had told me to be there in the morning with a biographical sketch, and I still could have renigged on the thing and not take it, but after staying up most of the night thinking about it, my wife helped me. Long about two or three o'clock I said, "Well, get a piece of paper, and I'll tell you what to write on it, and we'll fix him up a biographical sketch. I believe I'll go." So, the very next morning when I, I just walked in, and I see his secretary, and I said, "I'd like to see the governor." And, of course, the governor was wanting to see me, too (laughter). And, I just walked in and laid the biographical sketch on his desk after saying good morning or something, and walked out, and never said I would or I wouldn't. I just laid the biographical sketch on his desk (laughter), so he, he announced the appointment. Well, there was about two or three days left in the session in the senate, and so I was a personal friend of the president of the senate.

MJG: Now, who was that?

DEA: Ah, Ralph Bean from over at Moorefield, because I had been stationed over there. And, ah, so, I went up to the senate chambers and talked to Ralph Bean, because the, the democrats controlled the house and the senate, and they were knocking a lot of Underwood's appointments just for political reasons pure and simple. And, ah, I wanted to see what was going to happen there, so I went up to talk to Ralph Bean, and, ah, I told him that my name was coming up the senate for confirmation, and he said, "What for, Don?" And, I said, "Well, governor wants to appoint me the warden." I said, "How you feel about it?" And, he said, "Why, I'm for you, you know." We'd been friends long enough. So, I waited a day or two, and, and the senate confirmed me.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I went over to thank the senator, and he said, "Don, there was, there was some democrat in there wanted to shoot your head off." And, I said, "Well, thanks." And, ah, of course, the minute you're confirmed, you're the warden, and you're in charge, and so I left immediately and went to

penitentiary /MJG: Uh huh./, and it was kind of sickening in there the shape I found that place in.

MJG: Could you describe it when you first arrived?

DEA: Well, food was scarce, housing was terrible, I mean where the men lived in there.

MJG: What was it like?

DEA: Ah, there were cells. Well, to begin with there were 1800 men there, and it was built for something like 500 in 1866. And, ah, I just went from cell to cell talking to men, and talking to staff, and I found cells there with big holes rusted out in the middle of the floor betw en their cell and the cell below them. They're in tiers, you know.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: About four tiers high. Ah, half of them, the water wouldn't flow through the pipes, ah, you find anoother one the commode wouldn't work, ah, many men sleeping on the floor, no matress, no springs, ah, men that, ah, had tremendous b. o. for want of a bath. Ah, poor clothing. It was really disheartening to walk in the place. So, I contacted immediately the Federal Bureau of Prisons. I wanted someone to come over and help me line up what should be done there, what I should tackle first. There was everything wrong. Anything you would do would help. I never will forget the fellow that they sent over there, and they were very responsive. They just right away sent a man over there to me.

MJG: You recall his name?

DEA: Ah, no, I've forgotten his name. Nice fellow. And, we went all over the place, through the cells, the cooking facilities, and everything. And, we were walking down on top of the wall late in the day after we had rummaged all day through that prison. Then, he said, "Don, I only know one thing that ought to be done." He said, "You ought to call in the air force and bomb this place off of the face of the earth." I said, "Yes, that would, that would solve part of it, but what do I do now?" And, he said, "Really, start any place you want to." He said, "There's so much wrong here that anything will help." So, we started to work.

MJG: Where did you begin, and why did you choose that problem to tackle rather than another?

DEA: Well, the first thing I improved was the food, because I think a man to be incarcerated has to have good food, and then I tackled his quarters /MJG: Uh huh./, his cell.

MJG: Uh huh. How did you tackle the food problem? I noticed in reading Penscope, ah, you introduced, ah, chicken dinner one Sunday /DEA: Yes./ a month and creamed chicken on another Sunday, ah.

DEA: Turkey for Thanksgiving.

MJG: They had never had these before.

DEA: Oh, it was a rarity, but we had chicken regularly, and we went to, over into the eastern panhandle where they raised chickens and got them by the truckload and brought them in, you see, to save that, buying it local. You, oh (break in tape).

MJG: Yes (laughter). I had asked about the, ah, the local people. You mentioned that prices and expenses were much less if you went and got the chickens yourself where does this suggest that there was gouging or high prices charged by the local people?

DEA: No, I didn't mean to insinuate that, but we were cutting out two or three different middlemen /MJG: Yes./ by going direct to where the poultry was produced. We didn't only get our chickens over in the eastern panhandle, we got our turkeys over there.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, I busied myself with getting the food straightened up, and I got the State Department of Health to send in some people to help me work on, on the diet, ah, how I could rearrange it, and this sort of thing. But, that really didn't work too well, because they made up balanced diets for the prisoners from 30 days or something, and I tried to follow that, and the men just raised hell.

MJG: Why?

DEA: The men in there are not interested in a balanced diet. They don't want salads and this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, they were interested in good solid food, beans, potatoes, meat /MJG: Uh huh./, and to give them a salad.

MJG: Now, is that kind of diet good for a man who is incarcerated /DEA: No./ and doesn't get much in the way of exercise or, ah, who's, who is less than fully ...

DEA: Well, I had to back off from the balanced diet and give them more of what they wanted but gradually worked in celery, and raw cabbage, and this sort of thing to get their diet balanced a little bit. And, then, we, ah, introduced a lot of fruits, because we went over in the eastern panhandle and bought fruit by the truckloads and canned it and ate a lot of it fresh.

MJG: Now, this is particularly the peach cannery.

DEA: Yes. Uh huh. And, of course we upgraded the, ah, farm. We didn't have enough acreage, so we rented two or three more farms /MJG: Uh huh./ and put more men out there to work, and we produced, ah, roasting ears, and all kinds of fresh things in the garden, you see.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, we ate all we could while it was fresh and canned. One year we canned 58,000 gallons off the farm. So, you know we were farmers.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, would this train the, ah, the inmates at least in a skill which they had not had before?

DEA: Oh, I wouldn't say that what they learned on the farm was a salable skill. Ah, the fellows that worked in the dairy barn, yes. They could do that, but, ah, there wasn't anything unusual about them farming. Ah, get the use of the tractor, and, and cultivators, and this sort of thing.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, what about housing? You said that was the second area you attacked.

DEA: Okay, ah, we had a paint factory within the penitentiary, and so I stepped that up and, ah, started painting. I painted every cell inside and out and got rid of all of the bugs. And, I had a regular contract with Orkin to keep the pests down and this sort of thing. And, started the, we had all kinds of welders there at the penitentiary, and so we, we had a place rusted out, we cut that out and welded a new piece.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I, ah, replumbed every cell in the penitentiary /MJG: Uh huh./ both for water and for sewage /MJG: Uh huh./ and replaced commodes. And, ah, we had a mattress factory in the penitentiary, and so I made every man a mattress, and a mattress cover, and this sort of thing. And, so this, and the boys appreciated that.

MJG: I bet.

DEA: And, then when I went there, ah, most of the men had a radio, and you could imagine what 1,800 men with a radio turned on (laughter) and each trying to play it louder than the man next, in the cell next to him what kind of a racket that would be. It was almost unbearable in those halls, and so I was able to purchase a, a radio communication system that I could pipe it into each cell and give each man an earphone and, ah, get rid of that noise in the hall. Of course, a lot of them still had their radios, and my rule was that, ah, once your radio broke down, there's no replacing and no repair. You're on this new system, and they had three different stations that they could choose from. And, so that worked beautifully. Quieted the place down. And, then I put, ah, televisions in the hall where a man that behaved himself could sit and watch these programs on television. And, ah.

MJG: Can I ask a very, a question that comes to my mind knowing the kinds of budgets that state penitentiaries operate under, how were you able to do this?

DEA: Well, actually, by raising our own food we saved a lot of money.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, I guess that was my big thing as far as budget was concerned was not buying that food on the open market but producing it /MJG: Uh huh./, because we produced our own hogs, we produced our own milk, and we had chickens, and producing eggs /MJG: Uh huh./; and, and buying where it was produced instead of coming through the middleman after it had been processed, we processed it ourself. We had the man power.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so that's where I saved my money.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I put it in the things /MJG: Uh huh./ to better the situation for the boys.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, then, ah.

MJG: Well, shortly after you arrived, you, ah, were able to arrange a transferral of tubercular prisoners to the Hopemont Sanitorium. Can you tell me how that came about? Had that been done before or was that something?

DEA: Ah, no, the first time, but the man that had been here before me, this man Tucker /MJG: Uh huh./ had, ah, started to build, ah, a section of Hopemont over there that would hold prisoners putting bars on the windows and barring the doors, and this sort of thing. But, when the senate failed to confirm him, of course, he was automatically out, and so that program was going at the time I went there, and I finished it. And, then, we transferred these men with tuberculosis over to Hopemont, and, ah, that relieved a lot of tension, because the men were scared to death of getting tuberculosis in there.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh.

DEA: And, then one of the interesting things we did for the inmates was, ah, the religious program at the penitentiary, and actually, only about a dozen old torn-up songbooks was all they had. And, so, ah, I didn't have any money at that time to buy any songbooks, and so, I, I was attending the Methodist Church

there. I believe it was Calvary, and so I asked the board there at the church if they would buy me some songbooks. And, they bought me 50.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, I asked the if the board ever went to the worship service in there. Everybody said, "No, I never heard tell such a thing as that." And, I said, "Well, we're going to change that. I'll go with you." And, so, those old boys, they followed me in there. Oh, ah, first time I think maybe we had 50, and, ah, used up all the songbooks. And, so, I went back to Calvary, and I said, "I need more songbooks." And, they bought me another 50, and I used that up. And, the churches, I went to other churches /MJG: Uh huh./, and they kept providing me with songbooks, and we got that up to 495 in there. We had a tremendous time.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, were these interdenominational services at the prison?

DEA: It was nondenominational.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: It was, ah, actually, most of the sermons were by the Salvation Army.

MJG: Uh huh. This would be Lieutenant Eads?

DEA: Yeah, Lieutenant Eads, uh huh. You've got a pretty good memory.

MJG: (Laughs) I have to do my homework, too (laughter).

DEA: He was a tremendous help.

MJG: Now, ah, the religious services from what I gathered from the Penscope, ah, were nondenominational, but there seemed to be a large number of, ah, new baptisims, ah, professions of faith /DEA: Yes./, and so on in the prison. Ah, could you describe the change in religious atmosphere while you were there? Well, as you say, the program did seem to expand from way 50 to 495.

DEA: Well, you could feel it. You could feel the difference. You really could. And, one of the interesting things about that religious program we had there, I was talking to the warden over at Medium Security Prison, Huttonsville, fellow by the name of Priam one day, and he said, ah, "Would you have any idea where a certain type songbook comes from?" He said, "We would transfer a man from maximum security over to medium security," and he said, "There's been some songbooks showing up around here." And, I said, "Well, let me see one of them." And, of course, it was our songbook.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, those fellows were carrying those off over to medium security. Well, really it tickled me to death that they even wanted them.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh.

DEA: So, it was a nice program.

MJG: Did it include, ah, study groups, Bible study and.

DEA: Well, there were lots of these, ah, ah, study programs that are handled through correspondence /MJG: Uh huh./, kind of correspondence courses on the Bible. A lot of the men worked those, at those.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: A lot of those going on.

MJG: Uh huh. What about recreation? What did you do for recreation?

DEA: Well, recreation was bad, and I really never got much done. We had a.

MJG: Well, you seemed to do well with the heart fund, ah, boxing match.

DEA: Well, of course, we had boxing matches, but, ah, the boxing matches up until I went there had been for outsiders /MJG: Uh huh./, and I put on boxing matches for the inmates.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, they had a baseball team that always played an outside team, and outside class come in and see them, but I put on baseball games for the inmates. Ah, oh, I think we put up a volleyball court and a basketball court. I wanted a swimming pool, but I never did get that. I, I don't, I don't recall anything else.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh. I noticed in one of the first columns you did, ah, for the, ah, Penscope, you mentioned wanting to see some sort of committee, ah, set up. In the March, 1958, number you say, ah, you favored a council group of inmates representing the various cell blocks and shops to confer with official groups including the warden, ah, you know, about the problems, the internal problems of the prison. And, then, I notice in the next number, there's a letter from a prisoner, Ernest Romanoff, ah, who endorsed this committee system and setting it up, ah, and calls for the election of prisoners and a selection also of, of guards from each shift. Ah, did anything ever come of that?

DEA: No, sir, never did. There was lots of, ah, opposition to that thing in, in prison officials. Ah, of course, I belonged to the National Warden's Association and would, ah, attend their conferences and talk to old wardens and people that had tried everything. And, and the trend at that time was not to get involved in that that it wasn't good.

MJG: Uh huh. Why?

DEA: Ah, ah, they seemed to think it would be a clique, and you have those cliques among the inmates, but I always made myself available to my men, the inmates.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I would go out in the yard and stand there by the hour and talk to those men. Just, they'd cluster around me just, oh, 50 or 60 men completely in a circle maybe, you know. And, I always took my notebook with my and my pencil /MJG: Uh huh./, and somebody ask something or made a suggestion, I jotted that down, and that was my means of communicating with the inmates. And, about once a month I would make the rounds of the cell and talk to every man in the cell.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, he would get a chance to talk to me without too many people around, you see. And, so that was my means of communicating /[MJG: Uh huh./] with the men.

MJG: You feel it was successful?

DEA: Oh, yes, yes, sir. People used to look out the window at me out there in the yard with, oh, 12, 1,500 men, and, of course, there were guards on top of the towers, but none right in the yard with me.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, they'd say, "Well, how can you do that? Aren't you afraid?" I said, "No, those are my friends."

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, they really were.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I didn't feel any anxiety at all /[MJG: Uh huh./] with those fellows at all, because the warden holds a unique position.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Whatever they get has to come through him, you see /[MJG: Uh huh./], and we were doing things. Had watermelon feeds for them and, ah, ice cream feeds on holidays, and, ah.

MJG: I noticed you also introduced a system of, ah, for those men who recieved no packages or, ah, letters at Christmas you used the proceeds from the canteen and the machines.

DEA: And, then, the, and the churches gave us most of that.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, this, too, was then a new program.

DEA: That's right. There were so many men in there that were nobody really seemed to know they were there. No visits, no mail, no packages. Kind of forgotten men really. And, so, that was really something for those old boys.

MJG: Uh huh. What about education?

DEA: Well, that's one of the things we did upgrade. We built or started in the a new education program there. I had a teacher on the elementary level. One on the, no, I believe I had maybe three or four teachers one time, and they had everything from the first grade right up on through high school.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, we had several boys come up through that thing, ah, get their high school diploma. They took G. E. D. I believe it is, test and qualified for a high school dkploma. And, the library, we, ah, in the library, we tried to get a newspaper from every town in the state where our boys could go in and read the hometown news, you know.

MJG: Now, how did you get these papers privately you subscribed to by.

DEA: Ah, no, we begged them and so, ah.

MJG: Uh huh. What was the response? Was it generally good?

DEA: Good, it was good, yeah. And, ah, oh, I, I thought we did pretty well with what we had to work with in the education department. Any man that wanted to go to school could.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: We arranged his work schedule so he could take his classes and this sort of thing.

MJG: What kinds of new programs did Mr. Day add or were adding, what were the kinds of things that were done? You say beyond the, ah, the high school level, ah, wood-working craft. That sort of thing?

DEA: No, no, we didn't, ah, we didn't go beyond the high school level. They have now college programs up there which is good /MJG: Uh huh./, exceptionally good. But, we didn't, because we had nothing when we started. We thought we were doing exceptionally well to get a good grade school and good high school with qualified teachers.

MJG: Uh huh. Were they hard to come by, teachers?

DEA: Ah, most of them were retired teachers.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Grand.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Wonderful.

MJG: Did you experiment at all in programs with inmates doing teaching in again skills and crafts?

DEA: Yes, yes.

MJG: Now, how did these work?

DEA: Ah, very well. Ah, you take a good leather worker, ah, really it's an art.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Tremendous skill involved, and, ah, actually the men in there taught the men in there. There wasn't any outside instruction. It all came from the men.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, we had an art show and organized a good band and /MJG: That's an interesting story./ the band, and I begged the instruments.

MJG: Ah.

DEA: I put out appeal after appeal, and, by golly, we got enough instruments to start that band, and, ah, and I had a man on the custodial force there that could direct the band. Fellow by the name of Vest. And, he'd take those boys out on the lawn and, ah, have concerts.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Oh, we were in all kinds of things. And, the old mound up there. I guess the mound was caused me more trouble than any other one thing at Moundsville. Wasn't, wasn't the

inmates that caused me trouble.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, I think they were grand to work with.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: But, the mound (dog barking) had grown up in. I don't know what he's after. The mound had grown up in brush and briars, and all kinds of junk, and so we decided to clean that off. And, it had washed down the side so the dirt was piled up around the basement now, and so I put men out there with buckets to scrape it back up on top, you know. I had all kind of manpower. Like when it came to the lawns. I didn't have a power mower on the place. I just bought more hand mowers. Put more men to work to get them doing something, you know.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, I, I used masses of men /MJG: Uh huh./ and, ah.

MJG: This has been quite a different experience from motor vehicles with 17 highly trained to many who are not so trained.

DEA: Yeah, but out of 1,800 we had over 300 working outside /MJG: Uh huh./ and, ah.

MJG: By outside, what do you mean by that?

DEA: Outside the wall /MJG: Uh huh./ on the farm or on the mound or they weren't confined.

MJG: Uh huh. What about medical care?

DEA: Well, the medical end of it was not good, and it wasn't much better when I left other than I did have a regular physician coming in there every day for calls. And, a man to go on sick call if he needed to and that sort of thing, but our hospital was nothing. And, ah, I'll have to admit it wasn't much improved when I left.

MJG: Yes, but, ah.

DEA: But, we did have a regular physician /MJG: Uh huh./, and,

ah, of course, we had a good dental program there, too.

MJG: Well, when that was begun, ah, you, I noticed in the July number of Penscope, ah, you had a Fourth of July festivity which raised $169.08 which you used then for eye glasses and teeth for inmates who didn't have funds accredited to their account.

DEA: You see, the dental program up until I went there had been only to pull teeth /MJG: Uh huh./, and I think they had an old pair of forcepts there and did most of the pulling themselves. Some inmate pulled their teeth if they had a bad cavity, and, consequently, men that had been there, oh, maybe 10, 20, 30 years, why, his teeth were all gone, you know. Of course, there was no money in the budget to do any dental work, and so these prison gospel singers that I had everyplace we sang, when they first started out, they wanted to take up collection. I said, "No, we have no reason to accept a collection," and turned it down. And, then I got to thinking of also trying to get this dental program going, and I thought, my goodness, here's people just dying to help us. Let them help.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so we accepted donations from those people. Why, it's amazing the amount they would give us. Seemed to me like sometimes it was up almost $200.

MJG: Oh, my.

DEA: Ah, but we sang all over the state, and we'd take this money and buy eyeglasses, and, ah, I got our dentist come in there and teach my boys how to make dentures, and, ah, every man in there with no teeth had new dentures. And, I mean they were nice ones.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, it was a program.

MJG: Hmm. Probably the, the thorniest thing, the thorniest problem a warden in a prison has to face or had to face, ah, at the time you were warden there at a maximum security prison, ah, is the problem of, of the man on death row. I

I know during your tenure the last West Virginians, ah, to be executed for criminal offenses were executed there. Could you tell me what it's like for the warden under such circumstances?

DEA: Well, it's a terrible ordeal. There's no other way to describe it. It's just really terrible, because you have a man involved that's in your custody that you have to look after his welfare. You try to visit him everyday for just a little bit, because he wants to talk to you and, ah.

MJG: What did you talk about?

DEA: Well, many times he would choose the subjects of what we talked about. His family, maybe his children, or his father and mother and their circumstances, and, ah, maybe he had a few, ah, personal effects that he wanted to go to somebody and this sort of thing. And, many times we'd talk about, we always had some kind of a, a request into the state supreme court or local court or something trying to get a reversal or a stay. We'd talk about those things. And, as it drew near to the time, of course, everthing got a little more tighter, a little more tense, and you could see it in the staff, and you could see it in the inmates, and you could see it in the individual.

MJG: How could you see it in the inmates and staff? What were the most visible signs?

DEA: Well, I think being quiet was the most visible sign, ah, in the staff and the inmates, too. Everybody just seemed to get each day a little more speechless, ah, not saying anything, just thinking.

MJG: Now, as you, you dealt then with prisoners, ah, about to be executed, ah, part of your responsibility was, was to talk with them. What else? How else did you, you feel the strain, the pressure, the.

DEA: Well, a, a man on death row that has his execution date set, I paid particular attention to his spiritual welfare. I would make sure that the, his minister would come sometime or Lieutenant Eads or maybe on of the other local ministers. And, I would ask him to come in and talk to them and most of those fellows made a profession of faith. I believe all

three did and were baptised before they were executed. And, I had to call in an outside minister to, I think the minister from Calvary, ah, I've forgotten his name now, but, ah, he came in and baptised them, because the Salvation Army even though they have a religion, it doesn't have baptism in it. So, I had to get an outsider to come in and do the baptising. We built an old tank in the shop and put it up there in the auditorium in front of all the boys. Had our baptismal service.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, then, ah, I was very careful on the custodial people about handling an inmate that was sent to die. I wanted somebody that didn't cuss and raise hell /MJG: Uh huh./ that would set a good example for him and could hive him a little help spiritually. I paid particular attention to his (break in tape).

SIDE TWO

MJG: We were talking about paying attention to his food in the last day.

DEA: I really tried to papmer him a little bit with food, ah, give him the things he liked. And, of course, ah, on the last day, he could order anything he wanted. Wouldn't make any difference what it was. We'd get it for him.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: If it was watermelon in December, he'd still get watermelon. And, then, ah, two of those fellows asked me to eat their last meal with them, and that was difficult.

MJG: I can imagine.

DEA: That's one time it would hardly go down. Of course, Lieutenant Eads was there, and that helped.

MJG: Uh huh. How did they face death?

DEA: You mean the lieutenant?

MJG: No, the, ah, the inmates themselves.

DEA: Well, didn't seem to be any more difficult for him than it was for me and the lieutenant. I think he was the calmest one of the three. He was resigned to his fate /MJG: Uh huh./, and we were still building up to the day ...

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: It was difficult. But, after the the thing was all over, I was kind of proud they wanted to eat their last /MJG: Uh huh./ meal with me.

MJG: Uh huh. Did, was there any feeling of resentment as to you as the man who was responsible for keeping a person incarcerated or, ah, feeling that, you know, if it weren't for you as warden, or if it weren't for someone in the system somewhere, ah, this person wouldn't be where he was or was there, ah, ah, an acceptance of the fact that they had done a serious wrong to society and were being properly punished for it?

DEA: Ah, I never saw any resentment toward me.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Not a bit.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I didn't put them there /MJG: Uh huh./, and they knew that. Knew nothing really about their crime only what they told me /MJG: Uh huh./ or the case record was there and all his background and so forth. And, ah, most of those fellows you could look at his background, his home life, his educational background, how he was a misfit in society from a very early age. You could see all through his life that he was headed for that penitentiary.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Of course, he wasn't fitting in, and no one was trying to help him get fitted in.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: His, I think as I look back over their record and think, well, his church probably failed him, his neighbor failed him, his

school failed him, his associates failed him. So, everything in his life was a failure. All of them are that way. In fact, every inmate up there is that same way. You can go back on their record, and I'd say 99 percent of them /MJG: Uh huh./ right back from his first offense, petty things, you could see it building. Broken home, divorces, ah, hungry, ah, it was all there /MJG: Uh huh./ in the background.

MJG: Now, in these periods before a man was executed, what was your contact with higher authorities, those people with the power to, ah, stay executions or commute sentences?

DEA: Well, first when it reaches that stage, the governor is the only individual that can commute a sentence.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, I was in close contact with the governor. Ah, as it grew near to an execution date, we talked every day on the phone, and sometimes two or three times in a day that some little thing happened, and we'd call each other to see what it amounted to. And, of course, there was always hope there that it would happen, and I never knew, really, I never knew, because that was a decision the government, er, the governor had to live with, and that was his alone. And, ah, he was always quizzing me as to, ah, his mental ability and, ah, and this sort of thing. It would be about the only grounds that he would have in which to commute a sentence. And, ah, all three of the men I had were had reasonable intelligence and, ah, nothing unusual about them.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, were these men in the prison at the time you got there to be executed or?

DEA: Ah, two of them were, and one came in while I was there.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, were these persons scheduled to be executed the two, ah, during your tenure or was it originally scheduled the prior term?

DEA: Well, ah, one of the fellows had had two or three different stays of execution.

MJG: Why were they granted?

DEA: I don't know, really.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Ah, I don't know whether it was real or imaginary that for the reason of stay of execution, but, ah, I do know that it was put off /MJG: Uh huh./ so it would fall on somebody else, and that somebody else happened to be me /MJG: Uh huh./ or at least that's what I thought it was /MJG: Uh huh./, because looking at the case I couldn't see any grounds for any stay of execution.

MJG: Uh huh. Now what was your relationship with the governor, state legislature, ah, during your tenure insofar as the operation of the prison?

DEA: Well, ah, I had no difficulty whatsoever in communicating with the governor. He was always interested in the welfare of the men up there, but, on the other hand, the purse strings were controlled by the legislature.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, I had a, and we had a democratic controlled house and senate, and each year we put in for an increase in the budget in order to do some of the things we needed to be doing, ah, a program of rehabilitation. I could handle his food, I could handle, ah, his housing situation, but I did put in I, ah, recapping plant for one thing we put in there. Ah, but, matter of fact, the legislature cut my budget one year I was there from what it had been the previous year.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: So.

MJG: So, then there seems to have been some politics at least in the allocation of funds.

DEA: Well, I'm sure of that. But, on the other hand, when I talked to Ralph Bean, the Senator Ralph Bean, the president of the senate about the appropriation for the penitentiary, he startled me by saying, ah, "Don, just who gives a damn about your institution?" Well, I was just about floored when he made that remark to me when I had been talking to him about

so many things we needed. And, he hesitated a little bit, and he said, ah, "We, need money for everything in West Virginia. Would you take it away from the Department of Education to give it to the penitentiary?" And, I said, "No." "Would you take it away from state hospitals, and mental health, and so forth, and give it to the penitentiary?" And, I said, "No." And, he went through a great list of things like that, and I know they needed money as bad as I did. He said, "That's it. You're the last man on the totem pole, your institution when it comes to allocating state money."

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, he said, "You always will be, because they're influental people trying to get money for other agencies. You're alone when you try to get yours ..."

MJG: How did this affect your morale in operating the prison?

DEA: Well, it hurt. It hurt terribly, but, on the other hand, we had so many good things going in there and, ah, doing so many nice things for the inmates that, ah, we survived on that.

MJG: If you'd had the funds, what kind of rehabilitation program did you envision?

DEA: Well, I contend that a, a man that, that has been in the penitentiary needs to make his livelihood with his hands not in a position of trust in bookwork or this sort of thing. He needs to work with his hands, and it could be carpentry, it would be plumbing, it could be electricity, ah, the recapping plant we had, ah, there are so many things that you could teach him to do if you had an instructor and the facilities. That's what I wanted to do. I wanted a program in there to build men /MJG: Uh huh./ to stablize him when he went out into the outside which is hostile toward him in the first place, because he's got a record. He has to do a good job.

MJG: Uh huh. And, you felt that the probability of his gaining some kind of employment was considerably better if it was some sort of skilled manual than regular white collar.

DEA: Yes, sir, yes, sir. And, I, I don't think they, their chances

of getting into the position of trust where you handle money and this sort of thing. I don't think it's good for them, because they'd falled from grace before. I think he needs to earn a living by using his hands /MJG: Uh huh./, and I think you ought to teach him those skills /MJG: Uh huh./, because, ah, the men going out of that penitentiary went out of there with nothing. Matter of fact, the state provided him a ticket to his home and I think two dollars and a half in his pocket. They didn't even have money for a new suit, a new hat, an overcoat. Not a thing. They put a man on a bus in zero weather with no coat on. And, that's another place where we used our money from the prison gospel donations to have good clothes for a man going out of there /MJG: Uh huh./ and some money in his pocket.

MJG: You also in this line of, of, of skilled labors, it was suggested by Harold Neely in April of 1959, ah, that a book-binding plant be organized at Moundsville. Was there ever sufficient funds to do that?

DEA: We never did get to that. We, ah, decided that this recapping plant would probably fit a man better for work outside than bookbinding, because there's no bookbinding plants around, and there's a recapping plant in every little town /MJG: Uh huh./, you know. And, so we took money from the industry account we had made ourselves selling our product to state and local government and bought this tire-recapping plant, and it cost us $55,000. It was one of the best in the United States. It was complete in every detail. And, we had men, men in working in that recapping tires, and we were saving different state agencies money, because we would recap their tire at cost.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Our labor was costing us ten cents a day. That's what we paid the inmates. And, so we had a lot of kickback on that from tire recappers. Tremendous amount. But, it was a good thing to train men, because I've had men, ah, call in from halfway across the United States that knew we had a training program wanted to know if we had a certain man ready to come out that was trained to do a certain thing like putting on the cap or the sanding off of the old one and, and this sort of thing which is really technical.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, we could have placed every one of them. We just had a good operation when I left there, and, of course, the administration changed and went back to democrat /MJG: Uh huh./, and that recapping plant was torn out of there and sold piece by piece within six months.

MJG: Huh.

DEA: One of the finest things we ever had up there. That makes you kind of sick.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, then another thing that really was disheartening to me in leaving the penitentiary we had started to build a good dairy herd, holstein, and bought high-priced cows. We had the daughter of the Canadian champion milk and butterfat producer.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, had a beautiful herd started and were breeding to the best bulls in the country by artificial insemination. And, I swear, I hadn't been gone a month till they turned in an old scrub hereford bull for those cattle instead of using the artificial insemination in order to get good heifers, you see, to rebuild that herd. All that sort of thing made me sick.

MJG: Uh huh. What were your relations at the time with republican politicians with respect to the prison? Are there any who tried to influence you in the operation of the prison or, ah, tried to support you? Were there big supporters in the state? You mentioned democratic majority. Were there republicans in the state legislature who tried to help out? Were there republicans who tried to, ah, use the place as a means of, ah, employment for people, ah, so on?

DEA: Well, actually, the employment situation at the penitentiary was such that you always had vacancies. The salaries were so low, and industry was always robbing you of your better employees, and you ended up with the poor class of custodial force. People that really no one wanted.

MJG: Yeah.

DEA: And it was a, it was a battle royal but any day a good man walked into my office was interested in working, I could put him to work because I had vacancies.

MJG: Uh, huh.

DEA: And so I, I had no difficulty with, ah, people wanting political patronage because I couldn't get enough men to fill the positions and hold them.

MJG: What about guards, did that present a special problem as far as . . .

DEA: That was a special problem and I would say that the custodial force was the greatest problem you had at the penitentiary, (MJG: Hum.) that I had up there.

MJG: Why was that?

DEA: At the time I went there they were making I believe, I believe about a hundred and thirty or two hundred and thirty dollars a month. I'm not sure which, and ah, it was a terrible wage.

MJG: Uh, huh.

DEA: And they had to buy their own uniforms. Well by eliminating some positions in the custodial force that I didn't think they needed I was able to increase their salary a little bit and I was able to, we had a, a sewing department where we made overalls and pants and other things, and by buying the material and, and making the uniforms I saved them that much. Well all the time things were, became more expensive and so really with all that I could do I was just about holding their own.

MJG: Uh, huh.

DEA: We were able to get a, ah, a good health and accident policy in there, group policy, ah, for the men. They didn't have that. About all they got was, ah, fifteen days vacation a year and that was it.

MJG: Hum. If I can come back for just a minute to the guards, there is one thing I do want to, to comment on, what were the kinds of qualifications you looked for in a guard or what were some of the kinds of things that if a man had in his experience would preclude his becoming a guard?

DEA: Well of course you, you would first of all look for a man with at least a high school education, /MJG: Uh, huh./ I tried to hold to that religiously and I tried never to employ a man that had been in jail or in penitentiary.

MJG: Why is that?

DEA: Well if you did employ him and the inmates found it out, they'd call him a jail bird and make fun of him and he was ineffective in his control over them. I, I didn't think it would work at all. And ah, we tried to employ people that were sober /MJG: Uh, huh./ level-headed, gentle but firm /MJG: Uh,huh./ because I had a hard rule there. The custodial staff never strikes an inmate only in self defense /MJG: Uh, huh./. There wasn't any doubt and I had the same rule for inmates. Don't you dare strike one of my guards.

MJG: Did you find that it was observed on both sides?

DEA: Yes sir, it was, uh, huh. I had a guard one time that, ah, got into a provocation with an inmate and it happened it was one of the inmates that was just a little mentally imbalanced /MJG: Uh, huh./ and the guard had been tormenting him and the inmate hit him. I fired the guard /MJG: Uh, huh./ because you can't have that.

MJG: No.

DEA: You've got to be above that. So I let him go.

MJG: Did you find that the guards, that the turnover in guards was less than the custodial staff or their salary and conditions better than the custodial staff?

DEA: Well when I, I needed guards and staff interchangeably here.

MJG: I see.

DEA: Both the same thing. Ah, we had no counselors.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: The only counselor I had was Lieutenant Eads.

MJG: Uh huh. You mentioned in the about the middle of your tenure that in a double issue of the Penscope that you felt that Moundsville was at least 50 years behind other institutions and was little more than a good county jail operating without psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists, or full-time chaplains.

DEA: Right.

MJG: That, this was what you mean then by professional staff.

DEA: Yes, uh huh. But, taking you back to the trouble with the custodial staff, and I mean guards /MJG: Uh huh./, caused you, ah, we had inmates in there with money. I mean lots of money.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Now, money wasn't allowed in the penitentiary, but it was there and always was /MJG: Uh huh./ and was still there when I left, but they would have influence on guards. Ah, you'd find a guard bringing in liquor to inmates, and this sort of thing, or tearing out mail uncensored; and, ah, of course, you fired those people as soon as you found them /MJG: Uh huh./, but, ah, just seemed like it was coming up all the time.

MJG: Uh huh, uh huh. So, then there was a pretty heavy turnover.

DEA: Well, the inmates was of higher mentality than, than the guards, you see, and so mentally you could overpower him /MJG: Yeah./ and getting him to do what he wanted done /MJG: Uh huh./, and so it was, it was tremendous turnover.

MJG: Uh huh. Looking back on the years you spent at Moundsville, ah, we've talked about a lot of your experiences there, the things that you introduced. What would you say were the

areas where you had your greatest successes and conversely the areas where you felt perhaps you had the greatest failures.

DEA: Well, the greatest failure was not being able to establish a program of rehabilitation there.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Now, I, I had worked it out where I could feed them all, and I could house them well, and, ah, ah, had an educational program that was good compared to what I had found there. Ah, I could take care of their health, I could take care of their teeth, I could take care of their eyeglasses. But, to train, to put them back into society, I had no program /MJG: Uh huh./ and there's where the legislature let me down.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Now, we could have done it.

MJG: Uh huh. Now, can, can I turn with you in the same years away from your official capacity if it's possible, and I, not, ah, as, as warden, and what, what is it like, or what was it like as a family man to be warden at the same time? How did this affect your family relations?

DEA: Well, it was terrible, really. Ah, you realize it more after you're out of there than you do at the time, because you're so busy you're not even thinking about anyone. Ah, the demand on you was such that you couldn't go anywhere without finding a long-distance call waiting on you when you got there. Ah, just seemed like there was something brewing all the time. You got, ah, rumors everyday of riots, and that's one of the things that every warden, ah, he's tuned in on /MJG: Uh huh./; and it seemed like just every day or so that coming in off the yard. You'd be surprised how that yard eats things into you.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, that worried you. It was, ah, with all the programs we were developing, and upgrading our building, and so forth, reroofing, and reflooring, and all this sort of thing it was terribly demanding. And, at the same time, you had to be

figuring out how can I buy this cheaper.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, everything at the penitentiary is bought through the purchasing department put out on bids.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, many times, ah, I would order something, and the person would let it out for bids, and it would come back much higher than I could buy it locally.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Well, I solved that by whenever I sent in a requisition, I'd hunt around in the territory someplace. I would hunt until I found somebody who would supply that to me at a reasonable price, and I'd attach that bid right on it, and so I'd send it right in with it. You had to get below that or you didn't get it, and so I knew I was going to get it at a fair price, you see /MJG: Uh huh./, because maybe, ah, oh, like Ford truck. Well, like a dealer says you can have it for $50 over what it cost me. Okay, I'd take his bid and attach it right to my requisition. Well, nobody's going to up that on me, you see. So, I saved barrels of money with that.

MJG: Uh huh. Well, now, how did this affect, all of these demands on your time, what reaction did they cause for your family, with your relations with those, your own family. In other words, ah, it seems to me that it would be an enormously draining position.

DEA: Well, there was an enormous draining on the whole family /MJG: Uh huh./, because at the warden's residence you do a tremendous amount of entertaining. It's a big mansion-type of a thing built out of stone right there below the penitentiary, and legislators feel free to come in there when they're in the territory especially when they're inspecting your institution and this sort of thing. So, you're forever having to feed and entertain these people.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Now, the cooking at the residence was all done by inmates,

and all the housework was done by inmates, but it required so much supervision /MJG: Yes./, ah, meal planning and discussion, and where will this person sleep, and this sort of thing. And, ah, so there was lots to do there for everybody in the family (break in tape). Junior high and taking piano lessons until we would pick out a song for the prison gospel singers to sing. That's the group I took all over the state.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And I would take, Susan would take that song for her piano lesson.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, the teacher would help her learn that one song , and then Susan would go inside, and we had a piano in there, and maybe she'd play that a hundred times before over each man's part. She'd play that bass clear through and get that bass singing that bass, and she'd come to the tenor and then the lead. So, they got that new song.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, that must have been quite an experience for her.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, then there would be times when we, my wife and I were both away, and there was entertaining to do, and Susan would seat those people at the table and say grace.

MJG: Now, this is at junior-high age.

DEA: Amazing.

MJG: That's amazing.

DEA: And, if there were guests to stay all night, she'd tell them where to sleep. It was amazing what that kid could do.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: So, you all work at it.

MJG: Yes. Now, after serving, ah, a period of years to 1960, I believe.

DEA: Sixty one.

MJG: Sixty one, ah, you left the, ah, penitentiary and, ah, then became director of the Wheeling and Ohio Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross.

DEA: Well, no, after the democrats won the election, of course, I told people then that I got paroled, too (laughter). And, ah, I messed around in real estate a little bit, and that was either a feast or famine proposition (laughter). So, I decided I would go back to college and finish my degree. I had been a junior when I dropped out, so I went back to West Liberty College full time and, ah, completed my degree and started teaching in the Moundsville High School /MJG: Uh huh./, and I was teaching sociology. It was a useful course. I did lots, taught the same subjects four times a day. I had difficulty remembering what I had said (laughter), but it was, it was fun. And, I liked the idea of having my summers off.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: I already had my pension from the Department of Public Safety. And, so, I wasn't caring really if I worked all year round or not, and, ah, I was perfectly happy there except that the facilities there at the Moundsville High School were such that every hour I was in a different classroom, and it ranged over three stories /MJG: Oh, my goodness./, and everything I wanted to use in that class, even though it was the same material one right after the other, ah, I had to carry it with me. I could have no bulletin board. I could have nothing. That, that disgusted me, because I, I knew the subject matter. All I had to do was read the text to keep me on, on the subject, and I was enjoying that, but that changing rooms was really bugging me, and so a fellow came to me from Wheeling. We lived in Wheeling at the time and asked me if I would be interested in the being the director of the Red Cross in Wheeling. And, I said, "No, I don't think so." And, ah, he didn't say anymore, and I didn't say anymore, and we just let it drop, because I really wasn't interested. I liked what I was doing. I liked those kids, and I liked to teach. I don't think anybody

was better qualified than I was to teach that subject. And, so as it went by a couple, oh, weeks or so he came to me again, and he said, "Wouldn't you even be willing to come in and discuss your possibility of coming in here and being our executive director with our personnel committee?" And, I said, "Oh, I could do that."

MJG: Who was this man?

DEA: Rev. Jarvis, Dr. Clair Jarvis. I think he's now in Charleston, and he was my minister. And, I said, "Oh, I would do that if you really want me to." And, so I went in there and started talking with those people and really didn't know what the Red Cross was.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Most people they just don't know the Red Cross and the more they talked and discussed that what Red Cross was, and I had been a first-aid teacher years before, Red Cross first aid teacher, but I still didn't know what Red Cross was. And, ah, finally, I said, "You know, you people are getting me interested, because I've worked all my life with the underdog, and I like to work with the underdog." And, I said, "That's what Red Cross is really." Ah, you have a lot of other things, but basically, it's working with the down and under.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, ah, I said, "Well, let me think about this for a few days." At least got me thinking. And, so, I decided that, well, they offered me a tremendous increase in salary /MJG: Uh huh./, but I didn't like the idea of working year around.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: So, that was a continuing thing, and it's the sort of a thing you might work all night, and you might work for several nights, and floods, and disasters, all kinds of thing. So, finally, I decided I would go, and, ah, Ernest McNinch was superintendent of the schools in Marshall County, and he and I were the best of friends. He had helped me out in my school in the penitentiary and had done me all kinds

of favors. And, ah, was a great educator. And, so I went to Mr. McNinch, and I said, "Now, I have an opportunity to go to the Red Cross in Wheeling. Could I get loose here if I decided to go?" And, He said, "No, indeed, you can't." He said, "You remember that contract you signed?" And, I said, "Yes, I know about that contract." He said, "I tell you what I will do, though. If you can find a teacher to replace you and in the meantime I'll be looking, too. And, I'll let you loose." Well, I wouldn't run off on him, because he was my friend. And, so, one month for a couple of weeks, and I tried every college in the country to see if they knew of a social science major that was available. There was not. I couldn't find one anyplace. So, one day I called him, and I said, "I give up. I just can't find you one." And, so he said, "I'm kind of about half on the track of one." Says, "Just give me two more days and see what I can come up with." So, finally one day he called me, and he said, "I found one that will take it." And, so, he let me go, and I went up there and worked for them.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: Stayed there for ten years. So, I'm retired again now.

MJG: Uh huh. What, ah, what kind of work did you do with the Red Cross?

DEA: Well, I was the director of the total operations in Ohio and Marshall Counties.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, ah, one of the big functions of Red Cross is working with service men. And, the, ah, Red Cross carries a tremendous responsibility with the men in the armed forces, because anytime he's in trouble, and I don't care what kind of trouble it is, he can turn to the Red Cross.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, it doesn't make any difference whether he's at home or whether he's in the service. He can go to the Red Cross man, because wherever he's stationed in the armed forces, there's a Red Cross man available to him.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, the armed forces are in 31 different countries throughout the world, so it's a tremendous thing. And, the communication system between /MJG: Uh huh./, you know, the Red Cross man in the field and the Red Cross people at home, deaths, and all kinds of things happening, but you're the communicating link between the home and the boy in the service. And, of course, the Red Cross has to carry the responsibility of, ah, taking care of people in a disaster /MJG: Uh huh./ whether it's fires, or floods, or hurricanes, or whatever it is, it calls on the Red Cross. It's their responsibility.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: But, you have other resources. Our National Red Cross comes in to help you when they're more than five families involved, they'll send people right in to help you and send money and this sort of thing. So, you have lots of resources.

MJG: So, you found that work, in other words, similiar to what you had been doing except for the amount of resources available.

DEA: That's right. Yeah. And, you were working with the fellow that was in trouble.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, so, it was kind of right down my alley, and so I went with them.

MJG: Uh huh, and I understand now you are thinking of leaving retirement again and, ah, joining the, ah, joining the politicians instead of, ah, being, being the bureaucrat.

DEA: Well, I guess once you get involved in political appointments and are interested in candidates and this sort of thing, it never leaves you.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: And, having lived all over the northern part of West Virginia and seeing things that have been done by county courts and the possibilities, and then I think of my home county and

nothing going on, ah, not taking advantage of federal money that's available for programs and this sort of thing. Ah, I thought, well, gee-o, use your talents, and your training, and your experience to help these people and get in there.

MJG: Uh huh.

DEA: So, I'm, ah, I went through the primary unopposed, and I do have opposition in the general election, but he's a democrat, and I'm a republican, and we have, ah, 3,300 republicans and 2,200 democrats in the county, so I, ah /MJG: You feel relatively confident./, I'm optimistic.

MJG: Well, I think it's good to close on an optimistic note, and I'll be anxious to hear how your campaign turns out.

DEA: I'll keep you posted.

MJG: And, I certainly do appreciate your time.

DEA: Well, this, this has been enjoyable to me to kind of relive your life.